

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Previously Presented) Apparatus for use in accessing sets of information stored in an information system, the apparatus comprising:

a computer having a user interface providing access to at least one information retrieval tool;

a computer store for recording data relating to information retrieval by users;

monitoring means operable, on receipt from a user at said user interface of one or more query terms for submission to said at least one information retrieval tool, to detect an indication by said user that a set of information identified by said at least one information retrieval tool using said received one or more query terms is relevant, and to record said received one or more query terms and an associated reference to said relevant set of information in said store;

weighting means arranged to calculate, in respect of every set of information referenced in said store, a weighting for every query term recorded in association with said referenced set of information, said weighting being indicative of the proportion of users who, upon using the recorded query term with said at least one information retrieval tool, indicated that said associated referenced set of information was relevant;

analysis means to identify a recorded query term for use with said at least one information retrieval tool, having, for each member of a group comprising one or more sets of information referenced in said store, a weighting in excess of a predetermined threshold; and

means for providing an information retrieval tool search result output obtained by use of said identified query term.

2. (Previously Presented) An apparatus as in Claim 1, wherein said monitoring means are arranged, in use, to detect said indication by said user wherein said indication comprises a request by said user to access a set of information identified by said at least one information retrieval tool.

3. (Previously Presented) An apparatus as in Claim 1, wherein said analysis means are arranged to identify a recorded query term having, for each member of a first group comprising one or more sets of information selected by a user from those sets referenced in said store, a weighting in excess of said predetermined threshold.

4. (Previously Presented) An apparatus as in claim 1, wherein said analysis means are further arranged to receive one or more query terms from said user interface, to identify a second group comprising one or more sets of information referenced in said store for which said received one or more query terms have a weighting in excess of said predetermined threshold, and to identify one or more further recorded query terms having, in respect of each member of said second group, a weighting in excess of said predetermined threshold.

5. (Currently Amended) An apparatus as in claim 1, wherein said one or more query terms ~~search criteria~~ include words or word phrases and wherein said monitoring means are operable to record words from said one or more query terms in a stemmed form.

6. (Previously Presented) An apparatus as in claim 1, wherein said analysis means include grouping means to identify one or more information categories represented by sets of information referenced in said store, to associate one or more of said referenced sets of information representative of the same information category, and wherein said analysis means are arranged to identify those recorded query terms having, for each of said associated sets of information, a weighting in excess of said predetermined threshold.

7. (Currently Amended) A method of accessing sets of information stored in an information system, said method comprising:

- (i) detecting submission by a user of a query term to an information retrieval tool, and a corresponding response from the retrieval tool;
- (ii) detecting an indication by the user as to the relevance of a set of information identified in the response from the retrieval tool;
- (iii) storing in a data store a reference to the set of information indicated as being relevant at (ii), and a record of the query term submitted by the user at (i);
- (iv) selecting one or more sets of information referenced in the data store;
- (v) calculating, for every selected set of information, a weighting associated with every query term, said weighting indicative of the proportion of users

who, on submitting the query term to the information retrieval tool, identified the selected set of information and indicated that it was relevant;

(vi) identifying weighted query terms from those calculated in, ~~in respect of said one or more selected sets of information from (v) having, in respect of each said selected set of information, a weighting in excess of that exceed~~ a predetermined threshold; and

(vii) providing an information retrieval tool search result output obtained by use of said identified weighted query terms.

8. (Previously Presented) A method as in Claim 7, wherein, at (iv), each said selected set of information is representative of the same category of information, and wherein the method includes:

(viii) using said identified one or more query terms from (v) to search for further sets of information in said category of information.

9. (Previously Presented) A method as in Claim 7, wherein, at (ii), said indication comprises accessing a set of information identified in the response from the retrieval tool.

10. (Previously Presented) A method as in Claim 9, wherein, at (ii), detecting said indication includes measuring the time spent by the user in accessing said set of information.

11. (Previously Presented) A method as in Claim 10, wherein, at (iv), said weighting is adjusted according to the measurements of time spent by users in accessing the respective selected set of information.

12. (Previously Presented) An apparatus as in Claim 1, wherein said group comprises at least one set of information representative of a particular category of information.

13. (Currently Amended) A computerized method for searching stored information using an information retrieval tool having a user-interface for input of a user-supplied query term, said method comprising:

for each and every item of stored information, maintaining a store of query terms previously used by plural users and individually weighted to represent the proportion of prior users who are considered to have found a respectively associated stored item of information to be relevant to a particular query term; and

providing an information retrieval tool output to a user of a user-input query term using said store of weighted query terms. ~~search criteria.~~

14. (Previously Presented) A method as in claim 13, wherein said weighted query terms represent a binary-valued thresholded determination.

15. (Previously Presented) A computerized apparatus for searching stored information using an information retrieval tool having a user-interface for input of user-supplied query terms, said apparatus comprising:

means for maintaining, for each and every item of stored information, a store of query terms previously used by plural users and individually weighted to represent the proportion of prior users who are considered to have found a respectively associated stored item of information to be relevant to a particular query term; and

means for providing an information retrieval tool output to a user of a user-input query term using said store of weighted query terms.

16. (Previously Presented) Apparatus as in claim 15, wherein said weighted query terms represent a binary-valued thresholded determination.